1:Hollis C-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

INTRODUCTION

The present work, by Mr. Hollis, Chief Secretary to the Administration of the East Africa Protectorate, treats of the language, traditions, and customs of the Masai, one of the most interesting and important tribes of those territories. I am not competent—and there must be few people in the world who are—to criticise by the light of independent knowledge the mass of material which he has brought together, and will merely attempt briefly to summarise the information about the race which we now possess. Mr. Hollis's previous contributions to anthropology, his opportunities for studying and daily conversing with the Masai, and his linguistic talents, which are well known to every one in East Africa, are a sufficient guarantee for the thoroughness and excellence of his work.

The Masai at present inhabit the inland districts of British and German East Africa from the equator to about 6° S. Few of them are found north of the Line, except an isolated settlement just south of Lake Rudolf, and they seem to avoid both the sea and the great central lakes. Many smaller pieces of water, such as Lakes Naivasha and Nakuru, are found in their haunts, but they neither use boats nor catch fish. They are divided at present into two sections, one of which, called Il-Oikop, is agricultural and settled, while the other, or Masai proper, is entirely pastoral and nomadic. The difference between the two is evidently not ancient, for both speak practically the same language, and it is probable that the agriculturalists of the present time are nomads who have settled down. On the other hand, tradition does not carry the history of the tribe further back than a century at the most*, and it would be rash to assume that the nomad pastoral state is primitive or very ancient. It is quite probable that there was a large agricultural settlement on the Uasin-Gishu plateau from which the more adventurous warriors detached themselves.

In East Africa the Masai are clearly distinguished by their language, customs, and appearance from the Bantu races (although the latter often imitate them, and have received a certain proportion of Masai blood), and equally simply

* The genealogy of the medicine men goes back about one hundred years.